

REMARKS

In response to the office action dated March 23, 2006, Applicants amended claims 1, 2, and 14, and added new claim 28. Claim 18 was previously canceled, and claims 19-27 were previously withdrawn. Thus, claims 1-17 and 28 are presented for examination. Claims 1, 2, and 28 are in independent form.

Claim 14 was objected to because the term "open areas" lacked antecedent basis. Applicants amended claim 14 and submit that claim 14 is in allowable form.

Claims 1-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Jackson (U.S. Patent No. 5,699,593) in view of Harwood (U.S. Patent No. 3,047,444). Claim 1, as amended, covers a loop material for touch fastening that includes: raised areas that are defined by fibers of a nonwoven web and are elevated above the plane of the web; rib areas surrounding the raised areas; and planar areas that are substantially in the plane of the web and are defined by the web. Jackson and Harwood, taken alone and in combination, fail to disclose each and every one of these features. For example, neither Jackson nor Harwood discloses or suggests a loop material including planar areas defined by fibers of a nonwoven web and raised areas defined by the web.

The Examiner interprets yarns 82 of Jackson as "linear raised areas." Applicants have amended claim 1 to recite raised areas that are defined by fibers of a non-woven web. This feature is clearly not disclosed in Jackson. Nor would the artisan have modified Jackson to include this feature based on the teachings of Harwood. There is no suggestion that would have led the artisan to replace the yarns 82, which provide loops in Jackson, with the puckered areas described by Harwood. Such a modification would require wholesale redesign of Jackson's loop material. Moreover, if such a modification were made, Jackson's loop material would then lack the planar areas recited in Applicants' claim 1, since Harwood's puckering process raises all of the areas between the adhesive "ribs."

Applicants' claim 2, as amended, covers a loop material including a web of nonwoven fibrous material that includes raised areas, rib areas surrounding the raised areas, and, between

the rib areas, open areas that are substantially free of fibers of the web. Jackson and Harwood, taken alone and in combination, fail to disclose each and every one of these features.

As noted above, Jackson describes a loop fastening material including a backing material onto which multiple yarns are secured. *See, e.g.*, col. 3, lines 32-34. The Examiner asserts that Jackson "suggests the open areas," apparently referring to the areas of Jackson's loop material that do not include yarns 82 and thus do not include loops. Applicants respectfully submit that Jackson does not teach or suggest areas that are substantially free of fibers, as now claimed. Nor would it have been obvious to modify Jackson to include such open areas in view of the teachings of Harwood. While Harwood does teach an embodiment having open areas (Fig. 20), the artisan would not have been motivated to include such open areas in Jackson's loop material. Replacing Jackson's continuous backing material with the "lace-like" network of Harwood (col. 12, lines 23-37) would make it difficult or impossible to securely adhere the yarns 82 to the backing material.

In view of the discussion above, Applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-17.

No fee is believed to be due at this time. Please apply any charges or credits to deposit account 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: _____

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